



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
3280 RUSSELL ROAD
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5103

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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MMEA
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From: Head Enlisted Retention and Counseling
To: All Hands MMEA-6 and All Career Retention Specialists (CRS)

Subj: MMEA-6 CAMPAIGN PLAN FROM JANUARY 2004 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2005

1. This document establishes a campaign plan for all enlisted retention and counseling for the next 18 months that will guide the actions of all members of the retention and counseling efforts throughout the Corps.

2. Background. As MMEA-6 traveled around the Marine Corps on Roadshows, IG inspection teams and retention assist visits, it occurred that we could compile the information we pass on these trips and turn it into official guidance for the retention and counseling effort. This is required reading for all CRSs throughout the Corps. It gets us all on the same sheet of music and gives MMEA-6 the benefit of a lot of brains out there who are similarly focused on the mission of retaining our finest.

3. Mission. On a daily basis, MMEA-6 approves and processes reenlistments, extensions and lateral moves (RELMs), Marine Corps wide, to provide the best, most efficient and effective enlisted career force. To this end, MMEA-6 also conducts counseling and performance evaluation for Sergeants and above who are eager to enhance their professional and personal development. Finally, MMEA-6 serves as the occupational field sponsor for the PMOS 8421, Career Retention Specialist.

4. Head MMEA-6 Intent. The most important thing we do is to serve the enlisted force throughout their careers by upholding the high standards of the Marine Corps. These standards are, and always will be, the Marine Corps' standards. There will be no shading around the edges, especially when it comes to the Marines who fall out at the lower end of the established standards. If a Marine is qualified, he/she is qualified, end of story. For Marines who do not meet the Marine Corps standard we will use our orders, directives and good judgment to affect the best end for the Marine Corps and the individual Marine.

a. If we work towards the above intent we will accomplish the mission easily. Both the Marines and the Marine Corps will receive the best service. Sometimes this requires us to make a tough call, but that comes with our jobs.

b. We have to be ready to flex to any situation that comes our way. We have performed superbly in support of OIF, the growth of the 8421 MOS, implementation of Fast Filling MOSSs (FFMs), and the recent turnover in the counseling shop. We need to maintain the flexibility that allowed these successes without becoming complacent or rigid on our thinking. We will accomplish this by starting with the mission statement, involving all concerned staff in the earliest stages of planning where possible and keeping an open mind regarding all courses of action until final decisions are made.

c. I assume hard work and professionalism on the part of each Marine in MMEA-6 and I will not address it here. Remember, it's not personal. Our job in MMEA-6 is to stay above the fray and uphold the standards while offering an unemotional perspective to all cases we see.

d. Unit PT gives us a break from the grind of work and builds unity in the shop. MCMAP training provides even more of these qualities as we progress toward a common goal. We will continue this training until all Marines in the shop are Green Belt qualified.

5. Execution. This section will be broken into current operations (0-9 months) and future operations (9-19 months).

a. Current Ops.

(1) MMEA-6 Turnover. During the summer of 2004 MMEA-6 will lose three officers, four CRSs and two counselors. We must complete turnover files and put a great deal of solid work into making the learning curve as steep as possible for our new additions. Also we need to take charge of the assignments to our critical billets so that we receive the right type of Marine for each billet. We will do that by coordinating with the fleet, appropriate monitor sections of MMEA and MMOA and finally scrubbing these Marines' records to ensure suitability with the billets assigned.

(2) 8421 MOS

a) Build. As of the writing of this Campaign Plan the CRS MOS is significantly short in Sergeants. There have been great strides made in the recruitment of new Career Retention Specialists (CRSs) as evidenced by the nearly twenty Marines we have scheduled for the January 04 class. This effort needs to continue until we fill our boatspaces for FY 04. The current world situation needs the services of trained 8421's and we are currently behind the power curve on this one. Recruitment of CRSs should be a year-round event.

b) Train. Aside from schooling, we need to work to make our "in house" training something to be envied throughout the Marine Corps. There are several great unit programs out there. Any good program starts with the basics and our basics are updated in the new T&R manual and on the various IG and CG inspection program checklists. These checklists can be enhanced with "lessons learned" type training from senior CRSs combined with supervision and oversight of subordinate units during day-to-day operations. Senior CRSs should be filling out fewer RELMs and visiting more subordinate sections in order to keep an eye on operations and fix problems before they start.

c) Stabilize. By FY06, the 8421 MOS should be stabilized and starting to normalize along with other MOSs. By this I mean that the MOS will have finished the five year building program, all B-billet career planners will be gone from 8421 billets and the 8421 MOS will need less Sgts every year from the FTAP population. It will be at this time, and not before, that MMEA-6 as the Occupational field sponsor will even entertain the possibility of Special Duty Assignments for CRSs. The MOS needs to be mature and filled in order to allow for Marines to go out on special duty. More to follow as we look into this area.

(3) Training. Training ensures the continued health of any MOS, and we must continue to ensure our formalized training accomplishes this endstate. All of the unit training plans listed above need to be conducted IAW our formal training so that we can enhance the effectiveness of the force at all levels.

a) Schoolhouse. For the next year the CRS school in San Diego will

continue to function at current levels to ensure maximum training opportunities for our FTAP latmoves into the MOS. Our focus remains the feeding of new Sgts to the fleet until we stabilize the 8421 MOS.

b) MCI. Work continues on the entry-level MCI course. I want this course completed prior to the close of FY04. Once completed and on the street I expect Marines to complete the MCI regardless of CRS school completion. This is especially true of those senior Marines who went to the old Career Planner Course and were brought into the MOS at its inception. For those Marines serving as B-billet Career Planners, such as recruiting districts and MATSGs, it goes without saying that they should complete the MCI early in their tenure.

c) Mobile Training Team. Nothing replaces face-to-face instruction and learning. I would like the schoolhouse to develop a plan to start the MTTs early in FY05. I think we should have two efforts on this. The first is an entry-level course for the Reserves and Recruiting Command and the second is a senior seminar to update those GySgts and above in the management of subordinate units. The first priority will be on the entry-level course. All MTTs should be no more than a week in length.

d) Advanced Course. Similar efforts to the MTT and basic CRS course should be applied to establishing a CRS advanced course in MCRD San Diego. At the outset we should look at scheduling this course no more than once a year for two weeks.

e) Martial Arts. I want every Marine in MMEA-6 to become Grey Belt certified during the winter of '04. After that we will start as a unit to progress towards Green Belt certification. Meanwhile, those qualified will continue to participate in the twice weekly training to maintain their skills.

(4) MCO P1040. The Retention Manual is my personal priority. You all need this thing on the street and we owe it to you. My goal is to have it out for distribution before the winter ends!

(5) Counselors. The current FY 05 E-8/E-9 selection board has left us with a hole in the counseling shop earlier than expected. Our counseling responsibilities will not fall off though and therefore you must recruit, screen and train new counselors before the normal summertime rotation. In the meantime, the existing qualified counselors need to stand by for more intensified ops until MMEA-64 is up to strength.

b. Future Ops.

(1) ACRS. The Automated Career Retention System (ACRS) is going to be the vehicle by which we move enlisted retention into the future. Not only will it be more accessible, but it should be scalable to the degree that we could add capabilities as the force matures and professionalizes. In the future, not only do I see ACRS improving our business practices, but also allowing us to decentralize retention. The program should allow us to initially carry on normal operations as we know them now, but also open us up for capabilities such as unit reenlistment authority, electronic signatures to the CG level and others. I would like us to begin testing ACRS during FY 05 for possible implementation in FY 06.

(2) Schoolhouse. Once the 8421 MOS is stabilized we will scale back the amount of basic courses we have every year and concentrate on our senior leaders, B-billet education and begin development of a seminar program that

concentrates less on rank and seniority, but develops teams from MSCs down to the unit level.

(3) 8421 MOS (SDA's). If we are able to implement an SDA plan in the MOS, it will be on a very limited basis. There is no "fluff" in the 8421 MOS. When a Marine leaves the force, he or she will create a gap that will not be filled due to current projected strengths. If the opportunities are too limited, it wouldn't be fair to create groups of "haves and have-nots;" in other words, sending some Marines on SDA and not being able to send the majority. This would create an unfair situation on promotion boards that would make some of our Marines more competitive than others. We want SDAs to happen, but it has to support the health and continuity of the MOS.

(4) Training. Once we have established the basic MCI and the new schoolhouse focus we will establish the advanced MCI. I would like this accomplished by the beginning of FY-06. With everything in the MOS that will be on line at that time it will be imperative to establish a senior leader MCI.

(5) Counseling. MMEA-64 needs to stay relevant and there is no reason that relevancy can't come with change.

a) The 101 and 501 career briefs are great and innovative concepts but they are getting long in the tooth. The message is still good but I want something new for those who have seen these briefs several times. You need to come out of the box to present much of the same information to the crowd without them knowing it. Along those same lines I would like to reorient on the 201-401 and get the message out to the fleet. These briefs are new and different, but we don't present them enough. We've got to come up with a way.

b) Refocus on the selection board debriefs. I think there is room for improvement and a new way to elicit from the board the intangibles of a SNCO selection board. We're starting to get "the same old information," and while we get a feel for a board's personality, we don't learn anything new. We have to find a way to crack new info out of the board. The way to get there is to figure out what info we need that we aren't getting and then devise a way to get it.


c. Miscellaneous.

(1) ERTF. Once every two months we meet face to face with the senior leaders of the 8421 MOS. That's more than any other MOS and I think we should be doing more with the opportunity. MMEA-6 gets up and passes information and the fleet CRSs ask a few questions and we all go home. We've been given the time and the capability, we shouldn't waste it. I want to hear ideas on how to make the ERTF better for the Corps and the 8421 MOS. I want to leave every ERTF meeting with a feeling of accomplishment and unity within the MOS. Even if we're arguing, we're building unity- believe me.

(2) CRS Conference. Similarly, what can we do to improve the CRS conference from a classroom session to something more? I am working with the idea of possibly setting aside some time to plan the annual moves of the 8421 MOS with the senior leaders in the MOS. This may work and will solve a lot of our problems when everything is on the table. This idea is not fully formed, but I invite your comments and other ideas for similar changes.

(3) 8421 MOS grade structure. We have about a ninety percent solution for the 8421 MOS grade structure at this time. We are finding that we have a few holes in what we'd see as the perfect structure with regard to some of the ranks throughout the Marine Corps. Many of these have been fixed for FY06 through T/O Change Requests (TOCRs), but many challenges remain. We need to balance some of the "nice to have" ranks versus a need to keep the rank structure balanced. Long term I'm planning on gathering the data from the fleet, putting that data through a vetting process and presenting the info during the next Enlisted Grade Structure Review.

6. Conclusion. This plan is not all-inclusive. Accomplishing the tasks outlined above will take the effort of everyone in the MOS. Every idea will be put to the test by asking, "Does this idea improve retention or counseling?" If the answer is yes we will implement it. We will review this document monthly and evaluate the progress we've made.



B. J. FITZPATRICK
LtCol, USMC
Head, Enlisted
Retention and Counseling